

Spartan Tales: Shadow of Hope

by Spartan 501

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Summary: Humanity is losing the war, and as the Covenant juggernaut sweeps towards them, they will have to act fast in order to survive.

With hope fading fast, ONI tries one last ditch attempt to buy time, and end up with more than they bargained for.

1. Chapter 1

Part One: Recruiting

> Chapter One <p>March 17th, 2552, Seattle, Earth, ONI Military Hideout;<p>

General Peterson walked up the hallway, and found himself stopped by two armed Guards. He held up his Clearance Card, and the guards saluted. He plugged it into the console in front of him, and placed his hand on the palm scanner. A blue light ran up his hand, and he felt a tingle from the scanner's nano-bot interface. The door clicked green and he strode in.

Before him were some of ONI's brightest Military Strategists, the old wise and gentle General Don Smith, the secretive Major Admiral James Kurt, the fiery Admiral Roxanne Gold, and the young but incredibly smart Corporal Frank Lice.

"General Peterson, how nice of you to join us, please take a seat." Said Smith, and Peterson pulled out a chair and sat down.

"Now to business." Said James Kurt, who, as the most senior of the group, was acting as the leader. "We all know why we're here, but just as a refresher, here we go; we're losing the war, the Spartan 2s are nearly extinct, and the Spartan 3s are taking too long to train to be able to send them off to die on their first mission. Something new is needed, and I believe we may have found it." He gestured to a hologram of a soldier that Peterson instantly recognized, a Spartan 2.

"13 days ago, a new Spartan group finished their training, they are

titled Spartan Deltas, and are the first group of what I hope to be many more Spartan units, they shipped out today, and are already on route to set up a listening base to spy on the covenant."

A series of holograms appeared before in front of each person sitting at the table, and Peterson leaned down to look at them.

"Before you are the training reports of the Spartan Deltas, as well as combat value/cost evaluations, and if you would take a moment to look them over, we can proceed with our meeting."

Peterson peered down at the holo-text, and read the reports, and was very impressed by what he saw. This new group had gotten so many things right that the others had gotten wrong, and he nearly burst out laughing when he saw how long it took to train them. Less than seven months!

"General these reports are impressive, but I must ask why you are showing us them, what value does it have to you?" asked Don Smith, and Peterson nodded his head. He too had been wondering about this.

"You ask a good question General, and here is you answer, I am showing these to you to get you to give me funding for the next phase of this Spartan Project, the Spartan Betas."

"Hmm, an interesting proposition Admiral, and though I do see the value of continuing this project, I would like some more details on what kind of fighting force they will be." Said Frank Lice.

"A grand one! They will be compromised of four teams, all color-coded, much like the Spartan Betas, with each team possessing six members. Their fighting prowess will greatly surpass their predecessors, and they will have a much smaller training time. They will be fielded Mark V6 MJOLNIR armor, and will carry newer-top line weapon models. Each team will focus on one particular talent, and will expand on it as much as possible. They will all be selected from the ODST and Marine forces, and will be subjected to the same "Over-Cap" that the Spartan Deltas were. They will also cost far less than any Spartan 2, and they will serve a second purpose, to test new armor. In short, they will expand and improve on everything that the earlier Spartans were, and more."

Peterson thought long and hard about these new spartans over the course of the rest of the meeting, which involved the ongoing sieges of human planets, and the beefing up of forces in the inner colonies. Many different projects were discussed during the meeting, but in the end, when he was forced to pick which of them would receive funding, he chose the Spartan Betas.

So did almost everyone else in the group, as he would learn years later.

2. Chapter 2

Chapter Two

July 21st, 2552, Stallion IV: Beachhead Zulu; India; Tango;

"Incoming!"

Dirt sprayed over Charlie as the covenant mortar hit beyond him, and he hunkered down in the trench, trying to keep a small of target as possible.

Another Wraith Mortar Tank blast hit, and it instantly vaporized the area, turning the sandy beach of Stallion IV to black glass.

"Damn!" he yelled and rolled to the side as another blast hit, but closer to him this time.

He held his radio steady and spoke into it; "We need reinforcements in our area, and we need em' now!" He screamed.

"Negative, I repeat Negative, the covenant have anti-air guns that will tear us to pieces. " replied the dropship pilot.

He swore. This battle was going from bad to worse.

The ground shook as another blue white ball of fiery death exploded nearby, and he peered across the trench to the only remaining member of his squad, Terry Brooks.

He thought back to the beginning of the mission, and flinched at the painful memories. Their division, the 256th ODST battalion, along with three other groups, had helljumped to the sandy beaches of the planet on a mission to secure a landing zone for the UNSC to land an army. But ONI's intelligence was bad and their division had paid the price. They had been hit hard on the drop, the worst of any of the three groups, with shade turrets shooting down over a third of their group before they hit the ground, another third landing wrong and dieing on impact, and the rest being gunned down trying to find cover on the exposed beachhead. In summary, it had been complete and utter hell. Only he and Terry had survived, and he wondered how long **that** would last.

Suddenly, an idea exploded in his brain, and he knew what he had to do.

"Terry!" he yelled.

"Yah?" She asked.

"Cover me!"

She swore, but he missed the words, as he was already moving.

He rolled out from under the trench, and brought his MA5B Assault Rifle up to bear, and fired a burst of shots to the enemy position.

He peered towards the enemy position, and got his first good look at the alien's hideout. It was built upon a large mound, and had several tunnels that he could see, and he guessed they fed into the ridge, and up to the anti-air guns. On top of the mound was a loose perimeter of stationary energy shields, Shade turrets, and ammo crates. Farther back, almost touching the ridge wall was a line of Wraith tanks, the source of the bombardment. There was a large army

of Grunts and Jackals inside the perimeter and tunnels, and to Charlie's remorse, there was also a pair of Hunters helping manage the base, which would only multiply the covenant's firepower, and lessen his chance of getting in. There were also a series of trails extending straight up the cliff, but they were too heavily guarded for any sort of attack to be effective.

His only choice for scaling the ridge was the tunnels, and he knew that they were his only chance to survive.

They were his objective, and he had to reach them.

Lives depended on it.

Purple-White shots of plasma filled the air as a shade spotted him, and he dove for a crater, the only cover that was reachable.

The blasts filled the air above him, and he knew that if he moved, he would be instantly killed in a hail of superheated plasma.

Suddenly the CRACK of a sniper rifle filled the air, and a vapor trail appeared over him, and the fire abruptly stopped.

He didn't exactly know what had happened, but he didn't stick around to find out, and he primed a smoke grenade and tossed it.

It landed right on target, and filled the air with the thick heavy smoke, which was nearly impossible to see in, let alone shoot.

He knew what he had to do.

He sprinted for the door, and charged head first into the grey-white cloud, one arm holding his MA5B, the other over his mouth.

He came out of the screen only a few feet away from the tunnel, and the turrets didn't even notice him.

The guardians of this tunnel, four grunts and a jackal were surprised to see him.

One of the grunts yelped, and dropped its weapon screaming, and ran head first into a jackal, knocking it down.

He walked out of the smoke, rifle raised, and a second grunt yelled out; "Run way!" and ran down the tunnel, taking two others with him.

He chuckled, at 6'8 he was a tall guy, and with his all over black ODS suit, minus the helmet, which he had lost on impact, black dirt, and bloodied face, he did kind of look scary, especially to the small squadron of grunts.

The jackal threw the grunt off of him, who ran, suddenly found himself face to face with the barrel of Charlie's MA5B.

He then proceeded to smack the jackal across the face with the butt of the gun, and turned and ran off, leaving the jackal unconscious.

Charlie wiped sweat off of his face, and surveyed the carnage before

him.

Half a dozen grunts, a few jackals, and an engineer all lay dead on the ground, bodies torn to shreds by his fragmentation grenade.

He checked his assault rifle's ammo counter, and saw that he was dangerously low.

He hastily pulled out a fresh clip and inserted it into his rifle in one smooth process.

He had been making his way through the tunnels when they had ambushed him, and he had nearly died getting the grenade off, but it had proved it's worth.

He figured that he was nearing the surface, judging by how much distance he had covered, and he would be very glad when he made it, as he hated the tunnels.

He crouched down next to a grunt, and picked up its plasma grenades, then turned to a door built into the rock itself, and approached it.

He placed one of the plasma grenades on the lock, getting it wedged in between two parts of the lock.

He armed the grenade, and sprinted back for the best cover available, a covenant communication's crate, and heard a loud THUMP as it detonated.

He swung around; rifle raised, and to his surprise he found that there was no covenant, or even another tunnel.

He had reached the surface.

He walked outside, letting himself bathe in the warm sunlight, and he looked down on the battle raging below him. At his height he could not tell the specifics, but he could see flashes of bullets and plasma all over the place, and could he explosions and shots dimly.

He reminded himself that he had a job to do, and quickly walked over to one of the turrets swinging his assault rifle back and forth nervously.

He came around the backside of it, and found what appeared to be the control station behind the turret.

He found a door, let it open, waited for a second, then rolled to the side bringing his rifle up to bare.

But he found nothing in the room, except for a large machine, which took up almost the whole room.

"What theâ€¦" he whispered to himself, but decided not to worry about the absence of enemies, and took out a satchel charge, which had been given to every soldier of his ODST division.

He was no demolitions expert, but, thanks to his training, he knew enough to set the charge, and set the timer to three minutes, which

he figured was more than enough time to escape before the blast.

He stood up, when suddenly he footsteps behind him.

He swung around, rifle up, safety off, but found nothing there.

He lowered the rifle, and a puzzled look appeared on his face.

Nevertheless he walked over to where the sound had come from, and examined the area.

Suddenly a blur flashed past him, and he exclaimed "Shit!"

He brought up his assault rifle, and unloaded half a clip in the general direction of the blur.

Most missed, but a few hit what ever it was, and suddenly it became fully visible, and what Charlie saw froze his heart. It was hunched over, but it was large, maybe seven feet tall, and had a sheer bulk that scared him. Its face had four mandibles instead of a mouth, and what little skin he could see was a dark gray. It was covered in dark black armor, and was carrying what appeared to be a plasma weapon, but was blue and was bigger than the plasma pistols used by grunts and jackals.

It let out a roar and charged him, and Charlie was immediately overwhelmed.

The new alien brought a four-fingered fist into Charlie's gut, and he was flung several feet into the air, landing uncomfortably close to a crack in the ridge, which sloped down steeply, but one might be able to survive the fall on it.

Charlie was still afraid of it.

That thing has to be some kind of elite soldier he thought and looked up only to see the things weapon pointing straight at his face.

The thing spoke, and to Charlie's surprise he could understand it.

_Must be speaking grunt. _He thought.

"Your destruction is the will of the gods." It said. "And we are their instruments."

Charlie readied himself for the end, but was shocked to hear a sniper shot, and see the things face explode from the inside, killing the alien instantly,

He looked up, and stared in confusion at his rescuer.

It was Terry.

She held a sniper rifle high, and he could see smoke still rising from it's barrel.

He blinked and mumbled slowly "Thanksâ€¦"

"No problem," she replied, then added, gesturing to the turrets, "Now lets and set some explosives."

"Already did." He replied, feeling pride swell.

Then he remembered something.

"Oh no..." He said.

He glanced at his wrist, which contained the explosives timer.

Only thirty seconds were left.

"We have to get out of here he!" he exclaimed grabbing her by the arm and running towards the tunnel.

Suddenly his heart sank, as he heard rumblings inside of the tunnel.

The Covenant were coming.

Fifteen seconds.

He turned around and saw the crack, and an idea hatched in his brain, an idea, but a risky one.

The rumblings got louder, and he realized time was running out.

Ten seconds.

He grabbed her arm and started running, flinging his assault rifle away.

Five seconds.

The Covenant emerged from the tunnel, and green flashes of plasma lit up the air around them, and Charlie took a hit to the leg, slowing him down.

Three seconds.

He finally reached the crack, and flung himself and Terry into it, praying hard.

One second

The covenant reached the crack, and began firing down at Charlie and Terry, who were picking up a lot of speed.

Then the charges went off, and the computer blew, destroying the turrets, and encompassing the whole top of the ridge in bright light, killing the entire group of covenant.

Charlie looked downward, and realized the ground was coming up fast.

_Too _fast

He tried to slow their speed, but his efforts didn't affect their

velocity much.

Resigning himself to his fate, he braced himself for impact, and tried to shield Terry.

The ground rushed up to meet him, and as soon as they met, a sharp pain flashed up his legs, and darkness swallowed him.

Sighing in relief he gave in.

3. Chapter 3

Chapter Three

July 25th, 2552; Napoleon III; ONI medical facility,

Charlie awoke in a small rectangular room, lying on a hospital bed. He looked up, and closed his eyes against the harsh light of the overhead lamp.

He opened his eyes again, and let them get used to the light.

He looked over to the side, and saw three other people, two men, and a woman, all lying in separate beds.

He looked at the woman; there was something about her that he couldn't quite place.

He felt like he knew her, but from where?

He groaned, his legs were aching terribly.

He looked down, at them, and saw that his entire lower body was covered in a cast.

What in Hell? He thought, I don't remember ever getting hurt this bad.

In fact, he couldn't remember anything at all.

No matter how he tried he couldn't remember anything solid, just bits and pieces, images.

He panicked, what in the god's name was going on?

Get a hold of yourself, he told himself; he had to be thinking straight if he was going to figure out what was going on.

Suddenly, he heard a door open, and he rolled over to see who it was.

A man entered the room, and Charlie could see that he was in his mid forties.

"Who are you?" he mumbled.

Surprise showed on the man's face, but it quickly disappeared, replaced by a cold calm.

"Your awake?" the man asked, with a hint of surprise still in his voice.

Charlie nodded, "Yah, and I really need someone to explain to me what the hell is going on."

The man's face staid its emotionless calm, and he answered.

"I'm sorry, but I can't tell you that, until later, I can't even my real name, but you can call me Rainbow."

"Rainbow?" Charlie asked, _what kind of name was that? _

"Yes Rainbow," he answered, obviously annoyed, and then, letting a hint of threat creep into his voice, added: "You got a problem with that?"

Charlie got the message and backed off, this guy could obviously flatten him in seconds.

Then again, a five year old could flatten him right now.

Rainbow spoke again, his voice now once again emotionless. "Now stay here I'll be back in a bit."

With that, he exited the room, and the door automatically slid shut behind him.

_Back in a bit my ass. _

That had been almost four hours ago, and Charlie had still not heard a peep from Rainbow.

He was **so **bored, and was getting very sick of waiting for Rainbow, especially with his legs throbbing.

Suddenly, and rustle came from the side of him, and he rolled over and looked into the eyes of the woman in the room.

"Who are you?" she asked, her face puzzled, "Where am I?"

He shook his head. "Your guess is as good as mine, the name's Charlie Smith."

She stared at him for a second, then said: "Jan Gold."

She looked down at his foot, and surprise lit up her face.

"What happened to you?" She asked.

"I have no idea." He replied, and when she looked at him funny, he added.

"I can't remember."

She nodded, and spoke.

"Strange, neither can I."

Charlie heard bead sheets rustling, and saw the to others in the room

waking up.

"Well look who awake," he said sarcastically.

"The sleeping beauty." Finished Jan, giving Charlie an innocent look.

Charlie looked them over, and began to size them up.

One appeared to be of Mexican descent, and had a confused look on his face.

The other appeared to was very pale, and his skin seemed to have a slight hint of blue. He looked serious, and was already studying his surroundings closely.

Just then, Charlie heard the door swing open, and heard footsteps as multiple people entered the room.

He rolled over and saw three people. The man in the middle was wearing the uniform of a Major Admiral, and Charlie knew he should be saluting, but he didn't have the strength. Rainbow was standing off to the left, and the third person was close fairly close to the Major Admiral, and was wearing armor like Charlie had only seen in promotional posters and news broadcasts.

Spartan Armor.

The man's helmet was removed, and he had a pistol holstered at his side. He had the look of a tough leader, and one that should not be underestimated.

The Major Admiral in the middle spoke, sounding used to issuing orders, which he undoubtedly was.

"Hello, I am Major Admiral James Kurt, to the left is Agent Rainbow, and in the armor is Spartan OD, and we will be explaining the situation to you."

James Kurt, Charlie knew that name, that man was one of the most powerful and respected commanders in the UNSC, what was he doing talking to Charlie? Also, what was a Spartan doing way in here, shouldn't he have been out fighting the war?

"You may be wondering why you're here, and the answer is relatively simple, but quite shocking. You have been selected to be the next generation of soldiers for the UNSC, the Spartan Betas."

Charlie's face lit up in surprise, had he just said what he thought he'd said?

"Naturally your confused, which is completely acceptable, and to help rid you of some of this, Agent Rainbow will explain to you some of the finer points of this operation, and the effect it will have on you."

Kurt paused for a moment, and then added; "If you will Agent."

Rainbow stepped forward, and Charlie shot him a suspicious

glance.

"As you already know, you have been selected for this new program, selected to be Spartan Betas. You probably don't remember it, but each of you has done a heroic thing in your past, which not only qualified you for the project, but set you apart from the crowd. You will each be placed in a different color-coded squad, and will act as their leader. You will be your squad's rock, their shelter. You will guide them, and you will learn things in combat together that can be taught in no class. You will serve humanity with your minds, your bodies, and your courage. Each of you will have been given biological and cybernetic enhancements, which make you superior to any other fighting unit, save other Spartans. You will be given advanced power armor, and will be the ultimate strike force, you will be Spartans, no more, no less."

Charlie gaped; he couldn't be a Spartan, much less a leader of Spartans.

"As Rainbow so eloquently put, you will each be members of four different Spartan groups, and will be the leader of each group. You will be trained in squads of six, and will specialize in a certain field." Said Kurt.

Hologram-lists appeared in front of each person on the beds, and Charlie glanced down at them, they read:

Orange 1; Charlie Smith; Team lead; combat expert; tactics expert

Orange 2; David Morrison; Scout

Orange 3; Tim Dotson; demolitions

Orange 4; Jeff McJenson; Sniper/spotter

Orange 5; Kim Cassidy; hand-to-hand combat expert

Orange 6; Chester Heron; weapons expert;

Kurt spoke up again, and said: "Before you are lists of your teams, learn these names, you'll be meeting them soon enough."

Charlie looked up at James Kurt, and wondered again why he was being chosen.

"Your training will start in two days, and you will be given access to top-line weaponry. In the meantime get acquainted with each other, you'll be seeing each other a lot in the next few months.

Charlie shook his head.

This is nuts.

Rainbow looked down on the group of soon-to-be Spartans from a hidden observation room, and pondered his task.

He was an original Spartan I, but the task of training a whole new group of Spartans, and being their commander, was still daunting.

He sighed, maybe there was no escaping it, he had been born to be a fighter, which was emphasized just more by his Spartan Training.

The augmentations for these new Spartans had already been done while they were asleep, and he felt lucky that none of them had been lost in the process.

Suddenly, footsteps behind him made him turn, and he saw another armored soldier walking into the room.

_Spartan 16DE, Andrew, _He thought to himself, and the armored soldier walked up next to him

In his shining green armor, with his Red and Blue Delta displayed across his shoulder, he was a sight to behold, even with out the helmet.

_Just think, _he thought, _in a couple of months 24 more armored devils like this one will be running around. _

"Huh." He said, and Rainbow turned to him.

"What?" he asked.

"One of those soldiers, I think I recognized him."

"What do you mean?" asked Rainbow, confused.

Andrew pointed at the one named Charlie, and spoke.

"I saw a funeral for him a couple days ago."

It didn't surprise Rainbow, he knew what was going on, he knew how dark this project really was.

"Can't be, must've been somebody else." Said Rainbow, trying to lure Andrew away from the conversation.

It worked, and the two stood in silence for a minute.

He looked over to Andrew, and a thought crossed his mind.

"What is it like?" he asked, and Andrew turned to him, slightly confused.

"What?" he asked.

"Training Spartans, what's it like?" he answered.

Andrew stood silent for a moment, and then replied.

"Hard, but rewarding, I think you'll be a good commander."

Rainbow shifted uneasily, he had a hard time believing it was true.

"Sorry, but I have to go, ship will be leaving any minute." Said Andrew, and he slipped out of the room, clanking in his armor.

Rainbow peered down at the group of men and woman beneath him once again, but this time with less fear, and more acceptance.

4. Chapter 4

Chapter Four

August 9th, 2552, Napoleon III, Military Training Ground;

Pain flashed up Charlie's body as a stinger grenade blew nearby, he bit back a scream of pain, and yelled out: "Grenadier! Hill!"

Another stun grenade landed nearby, and detonated, spraying stun rounds everywhere.

"Jeff! Where the hell are you?" yelled Charlie as another grenade went off, along with a torrent of enemy fire.

Suddenly, a crack of SRS99C-S0 AM Stun Sniper filled the air, and Charlie heard the grenade thrower slump over, a small dart with a numbing agent lodged in his back.

Charlie ducked out of his cover; rifle raised, and saw Jeff Mcjenson standing over the armored form of one of Whiskey 2, Andrew Lauren.

Charlie sprinted up to join Jeff, and found that Kim Cassidy, their Hand-to-Hand combat expert, was there with him.

He signaled them over, and gave the sign to move out.

They spread out, using the trees for cover, and found themselves steadily advancing on Whisky teams campsite.

All four teams, Oscar, Yankee, Whiskey, and Papa, or Orange, Yellow, White, and Purple, had been deployed to a five square mile stretch of forest, rivers, deserts, and even a small snowy peak, and each team were being forced to fight each other over turf and ground.

Charlie thought to Whiskey 2, defenseless on the forest floor, and a hint of worry crossed his mind.

He quickly banished it from himself, the trackers on each of their armor would see to each of the Spartans safe return.

The battles had been brutal, and it had only been a day. They had already lost one man, Chester Heron, Oscar Six, and had their camp overrun. They had resorted to being the aggressors, and while Charlie, Kim, and Jeff did recon and raided Whiskey teams base, Oscars 2 and 3, David Morrison and Tim Dotson set up camp.

Suddenly movement ahead snapped Charlie from his reverie, and he hit cover behind a tree.

Jeff had a good view of the situation, and he signaled the details to Charlie.

_Five Soldiers, Yankee team, units 1 through 5. _

Charlie swore under his breath, they were outmanned, and outgunned, and would take heavy casualties if they attacked.

He hadn't had anyone take tabs on Yankee Team, Whiskey had been the immediate problem, but now he regretted it.

He decided use a Gamma Cutthroat maneuver, and signaled to Kim and Jeff.

Kim nodded, as did Jeff, and both began to move out.

Charlie clicked off the safety off his rifle, and reloaded his clip. This was going to be one bumpy ride.

He looked over, and saw Kim was in position, and threw a grenade in the midst of Yankee team.

They saw it roll onto the ground in front of them, and dove for cover.

_Perfect, _He thought.

Charlie and Jeff synchronously fired their weapons, and Kim sprang into Yankee's midst. Yankees 4 and 5 went down by their combined attacks, instantly evening the odds.

But Yankee team was already recovering, and Charlie's group had lost the element of surprise, now was the ugly part.

Charlie signaled for cover, and charged in, rifle firing.

He took down Yankee 2, but he saw Kim go down by Yankee 1.

He rolled to the side as shots flew over his shoulder from Yankee 3, came back up and grabbed her shoulder, throwing her to the side.

He fired off a shot point-blank into her, and watched as the small needle hit her in the chest and sent her into unconsciousness.

He turned around, and saw Yankee 1 holding Jeff at point blank range.

He was not going to lose another member of his team.

He charged, firing, but she evaded his shots, and rolled to the side, firing her small SMG.

He ducked behind cover, and peeked out one side.

He saw nothing, and he knew that he had made a critical mistake.

A yell came from behind him, and he flew forward as she tackled him from behind.

He landed back first on a tree, and fell to the ground limp.

She walked forward, holding her SMG at her side.

He held up his rifle, pulled the trigger, but the clip clicked

empty.

He was out.

"Damnâ€¦!" he whispered.

But he still had one last trick up his sleeve.

He rolled to the side as a hail of fire hit the ground where he had been, making dirt fly up with their impacts.

But he was already gone.

She gasped as he came up and grabbed her wrist, grinning.

He twisted arm and her gun fell from her hand.

His grin got bigger, then suddenly disappeared.

Her fist came around, hitting him in the jaw and sending him reeling.

He saw her reach for her SMG, but it had slid away, and she couldn't find it.

He chuckled, and looked her straight in the eyes.

Her eyes were filled with anger, cluing Charlie in on her next move.

She charged him, but he was ready, and he sidestepped her attack.

He grabbed her and swung her into a tree, but she managed to divert the impact and land nearby on the ground.

She looked up, only to see his booted foot coming straight for her head.

She rolled to avoid it, but he brought a fist up and caught her in the chin.

She went limp as his fist hit her, and collapsed on the ground, dazed.

He stood over her, and picked up her SMG, and pointed it down at her.

In a few short seconds, they had exchanged roles.

He clicked off the safety, and pointed it right at her.

Suddenly, he heard a rolling sound, and looked over to see the remainder of Whiskey team, weapons squared at him.

He cursed, and dove for the ground as they all open fired, creating a bombardment of shots.

He looked up as shots ripped through the air barely inches above him, and realized that he needed help, and a lot of it.

He looked back over to Yankee 1, "Jan" he corrected himself. "Her names Jan."

He turned to her, and whispered over a simple message.

"Truce?" He asked.

She stared at him, then said; "Truce, but I need a weapon."

He nodded, "Follow my lead."

She nodded back, and he opened a channel to Jeff, hopefully undiscovered by the Whiskeys.

"Jeff, you read?" Asked Charlie, crossing his finger.

"Roger that, looks like they've got you pinned, want some help?" replied Jeff, and Charlie allowed himself a sigh of relief.

"You know it, fire on my mark."

Charlie cocked readied his gun and took aim.

"Three, two, one—"

He whispered, and then exclaimed, "Mark!"

Sniper shots filled the air as Jeff unleashed a devastating wall of fire at Whiskey team.

Charlie rolled to his feet and emptied his clip, then quickly reloaded.

One Whiskey went down under their combined fire, and Jan quickly ran forward and grabbed a rifle from one Whiskey, combining her fire with theirs.

Another went down, but then Jeff got hit, and suddenly they found themselves being forced back.

Charlie reloaded, cursing all the way, it took precious time.

They had to do something quick.

But they were running out of time.

Then an idea exploded into Charlie's brain.

His mind quickly slide showed through the flash memory training that he had endured while recovering, and remembered one little side effect of the stunning agent used in the darts.

It reacted very nicely with the Fir Trees of Napoleon III.

He dug into his combat pouch, dropping his gun, and pulling out a full clip of fresh darts.

"What the hell are you doing!" she yelled, but he didn't have time to answer.

He drew his small sharp pocketblade, and slashed open the clips safety top.

He reached inside, and forced his hands to endure the vicious cold of the cooled container, pulling out a hand full of tiny darts.

He slashed open their tops, and threw them, praying hard.

The throw was lucky, and they landed face first on the trees near Whiskey team, causing the little known volatile reaction.

The wood cracked and splintered, and he could see the wood of the tree now looked soggy and ready to collapse.

Sure enough, with a final loud crack, the tree fell, and the three Whiskeys cried "Timber!" and ran from the huge falling trees, only to be promptly shot in the back by Jan.

When the dust had settled, Charlie turned to Jan and looked her over. He thought about attacking her there and then, and he could tell she was thinking the exact same thing. But something urged him against it, and he decide that he might need her help again someday.

Suddenly, though he didn't know why, he stopped and saluted, and she followed suit.

Moments later they each turned and left their separate ways, and he strangely knew that he would see her again soon.

Very soon.

September 2nd , 2552, Napoleon III, ONI Training Ground;

Training dragged on, more and more information was shoved into their brains through flash memory training, gearing them up with tactical information, and more training missions were set up, often six or seven a week.

Charlie's Oscar Team quickly grew through the ranks of the highest ranked squads, and found their biggest competitor to be Whiskey team, who continually plagued their exercises and raids.

Oscar team quickly became good friends and partners with Yankee Team, and Charlie began to develop a special bond with Jan.

The two groups were often paired on exercises, and Charlie quickly learned the names of the squad's members.

Griffin Jameson was Yankee's resident hacker, and he often boasted that he could crack any computer Covie of human, and Charlie believed him too. The beautiful Patricia Mort was Yankee team's hand to hand combat expert, and she and Kim Cassidy quickly became friends, which Charlie was glad for, as both of them were kind of loners. Peter Lakeson was Yankee's disguise expert, and Charlie swore the he could make anyone look like anything. Daniel Wickenburg was the explosives expert, and he had a huge sense of humor, in comparison to Oscar team's Tim Dotson, who's serious demeanor often put him on par with Rainbow himself. Lily Parkston was their infiltration expert, and her skills at stealth were unmatched.

They got paired together so often, that when they did fight against each other, neither side had the advantage, as they both new everything about the other squad.

They learned a lot as their training dragged on, from the muscular structure of a grunt, to the engineering's of a slipspace drive.

They began to get snippets of information about their first mission, but most of it was kept under tight wraps, not being shown to them.

Rainbow also began to participate in their exercises more actively, which confused Charlie, was he a candidate, or their training officer?

James Kurt sometimes visited them as well and let them know of how the war was going, as they were desperately starved for news.

That was what was happening today, and Charlie was anxious not to be late, for fear of missing out on crucial information.

He ran through the sterling silver hallways of the base, he noticed the absence of people patrolling the hallways. Usually there were dozens of guard along this route.

He ran towards a small metal door, and stopped hard as the door opened automatically.

He had made it.

The room was a small amphitheater, with James Kurt standing on a small stage in the middle of the room. Charlie quickly spotted the five already sitting members off his team, and walked over to meet them.

He sat down next to Jeff, and a moment later he felt Jan sat down next to him.

"What's happened?" she asked.

He shook his head. "Nothing yet, there just about to start." He said, and she sighed in relief.

"I thought I was late, I hate being late."

Suddenly, a yell came from the stage, quieting the chatter in the stands.

"Quiet! Quiet Please!" said Rainbow, who was up on the stage with James Kurt.

He nodded to Kurt, and for half a second, he thought he saw a hint of sadness on his face.

James Kurt stepped forward, and Charlie saw that his face was dark and depressed.

A sinking feeling entered Charlie's gut; something was wrong,

terribly wrong.

"Gentlemen, Ladies, Spartans, I have terrible news." He began, and Charlie braced himself for the worst.

But even that didn't have much, effect, as his next words were to shocking, for well, words.

"Reach has fallen."

5. Chapter 5

Chapter 5

September 2nd, Napoleon III, ONI Military Amphitheater,

Charlie stared at him in shock, had he just said what he thought he said?

"How is that possible?" yelled a technician, breaking the dreadful silence.

James Kurt spoke again, sorrow lining his tone. "A vessel leaving Sigma Octanus IV was tracked back to Reach, and a covenant fleet of 314 vessels entered the system 0500 hours, and at 0545 hours, the covenant attacked in full force." He explained, and Charlie's stomach sank.

"what does that mean for us?" spoke up Sam Kay, Papa Team's leader.

"Well it means that we need you on the frontline now, and as such, your graduation day will change, instead of October 30th, you will be fielded on September 17th. I am sorry that you will lose the training time, and though it may cost lives, you are desperately needed in combat."

Charlie had barely recovered from the news about Reach, but he understood the situation. The UNSC had been caught flatfooted, and they were the bandage needed to stop some of the bleeding.

Rainbow stepped forward, his face back to its normal calm. "As such, another aspect of your training is being pushed forward, your armor testing, you will be fielded Mark V6 MJOLNIR armor, a powerful battlesuit that will augment your already powerful combat abilities." He stepped back, and part of the wall came out and did a 180. It revealed a large suit of tan suit of armor, seven feet tall, and having and looking to weigh over half a ton.

"This is the armor you will wear, it is extremely advanced, and extremely expensive, so take good care of it, cause if you don't you will be in an absolute hell when I find you."

Everyone murmured and laughed, glad for the joke, they needed it.

"You are dismissed." Said Rainbow, and Charlie got up, stretched his legs, then walked out of the room, pondering the recent events.

When everyone but Rainbow and Kurt had cleared from the room, Rainbow turned around and looked at his superior officer.

"Do you think they'll be ready?" he asked Kurt anxiously.

"Yes, they're Spartans, and you've taught them well." Replied Kurt, a smile on his face.

"One of them worries meâ€¦ He's got too much of a grasp of what's going on." He said

"Well isn't that a good thing?" asked Kurt, slightly confused.

"Yes, but it means that he's aware of what is really going on, and because of this he mistrusts me." He answered, and James nodded.

"That will not last long, I have no doubts about that." Said Kurt, and though he wanted to believe him, he found that he just could not.

"Maybe your right," he lied. "Well at any rate, there isn't much I can do."

James glanced at his watch, and surprise appeared on his face.

"Sorry to bug out on you, but I have to leave, fleet matters to attend to." He said, and quickly walked out of the room, and Rainbow pondered the future.

Then doing his best without technicians, he donned the armor and felt it's familiarity surround him. This was his home.

September 5h, 2552, Napoleon III, ONI Military Testing Ground

Grappling the sides of the Warthog, and basking in his newfound strength, he lifted it into the air above his head, before letting slam back down to the ground.

He breathed hard, this was nice very nice.

Over the last two days they had studied the ins and outs of their new armor, and today they were finally being let to test it.

No, studied wasn't the right word, they had had the information savagely plugged into their brains, without their consent.

But Charlie didn't care, not anymore, he was so used to having that helmet put on his head and waking up hours later knowing thousands of different tidbits that he had gotten used to it, and really didn't mind it anymore.

His armor was tan in color, and had an orange 1 painted on both shoulders. There were also several other places where additional paint could be seen, such as the wrists, the thighs, and in a stripe going across his helmet.

Now that they were finally being given the chance to use the armor,

he was seriously impressed. It almost tripled his strength, to the point where he could flip a scorpion tank with his bare hands.

It also had others helpful features, in addition to his adding to his strength, the shield systems protected him from damage, and the powerful robotic structure greatly enhanced his speed and agility. The built in sight, binoculars, and ammo and grenade counters greatly improved his combat abilities, and the motion tracker gave him an edge when fighting opponents in foggy or hard to see areas.

They had begun their exploration of the armor with a quick skirmish; using real bullets, instead of their usual stun rounds or stunning darts.

Oscar and Yankee teams had dominated the competition, but Charlie and his team had lost when the two teams faced each other in the finals.

After that, they had been given time to play around with the armor, and get to know it, seeing as it would be their home from now on, according to Rainbow.

He looked over to another Spartan, and his HUD automatically registered it as Spartan B07, Jan.

Suddenly, his helmet's speaker's picked up the sound of the door opening, and Charlie turned to see Rainbow walking in, a lit cigar in his mouth.

He motioned for helmets off, and everyone did so.

"Get over here!" he yelled, his voice edgy.

Everyone looked at each other, Rainbow almost never showed any emotion. Something was wrong.

Charlie approached Rainbow, ready and on alert.

"We don't have much time, so I'm not going to give you the full story," began Rainbow, and the Spartan's exchanged looks. What was going on?

"You have been training for the last few weeks, and now is the time to put that training to the test. A covenant attack force appeared in orbit a couple of minutes ago, and came out launching Dropships." He paused for a second to take a breath, and then continued. "Because of this, hundreds of covies are on the ground, with thousands more coming. There is grid of anti-air turrets, which would be able to shoot them down before they make it here, and a series of planetary MAC cannons, which would be able to blow the fleet up in the sky to hell, they are all controlled in a single compound, some six miles out, but the covenant parties have already secured it, and we don't have enough men to take it back. That's where you come in Spartans, we need you to secure that grid, it's our only chance. We have limited resources, so you'll each only be issued one weapon, and you'll have to use warthogs to get to the compound and take it back. We'll hold here as long as we can, but they have a near unlimited supply of troops, and frankly, we don't. Once you leave the base your on your own, so don't expect help to be comin." He finished talking, and Charlie felt his heart rate increase.

This was it.

"Now Spartans, lock and load!" he yelled, and they rushed past him, heading for the armory.

September 5h, 2552, Napoleon III, ONI Military Training Base

As soon, as they were around the hallway, Rainbow took off in a dead sprint for his quarters. He arrived there with barely any time to spare. He quickly plugged in the key code and rushed into his quarters, pushing the small button underneath his dresser table. The dresser descended into the floor, and the wall came out and did a 180, revealing a suit of Spartan V6 armor.

He hurriedly put it on and pressed another button to return the room to normal, then grabbing a now rare M6D pistol from drawer, he sealed his helmet and activated his HUD. His life status monitors came on-line, indicating full shield charge and good bio readings. Grabbing a couple extra clips and grenades from a dispenser mounted on the wall, he quickly left the room, hurrying down the hall to the command center.

September 5h, 2552, Napoleon III, ONI Military Base

Charlie led his team down the hallway, just behind Yankee Team, who were leading the pack. He quickened his pace to catch up to Jan and the rest of her team, and as he emerged from the group of armored soldiers, he saw a marine in full battle armor come around the bend, a MA5B assault rifle in his hands.

The marine turned saw the band of 24 Spartans coming around the corner, and fear filled his eyes. Charlie himself admitted that the sight of the 7' tall soldiers was scary indeed.

But the marine was braver than he looked, and began to speak.

"Sir, I'm Private Hansworth, follow me."

"Roger that marine." Said Charlie, and he signaled for the other Spartans to move out.

Several moments later, they arrived at their destination. It had a red arrow pointing to it that said "Armory" and it was marked above the doorway as well. Hansworth put his hand on a palm scanner, and the door slid open, and Charlie walked inside.

Rows upon Rows of empty gun holders encased the room, and Charlie saw that there was barely enough weapons left to supply the Spartans, and he wished he could have seen it when it was full.

"Spartans, lock and load!" he cried, and the four teams piled into the room, which was barely big enough to hold them.

He looked around, and spied a BR55 Battle Rifle, weapon he had learned about it training, but never actually used. He grabbed it off the shelf, and quickly studied it. Its design was simple enough, but aside from the ammo counter, it was a far cry from his traditional MA5B.

He checked the clip, and realized that it was dangerously low on bullets; he would have to be careful with his shots.

He made his way outside the armory, and found his team already suited up and ready. David Morrison had found two SMGs; Jeff Mcjenson a sniper rifle with surprisingly good ammo, Tim Dotson had grabbed a rocket launcher and a magnum, and was the only one of them who had a sidearm. Kim Cassidy had taken a shotgun, and Adam Heron had, like Charlie, equipped himself with a Battle Rifle.

Charlie saw Jan emerging from the armory, and was just about to go over and talk to her when two nav-points appeared on his helmet, one blue, one red.

It was followed a second later by Rainbow's voice.

"Spartans, proceed to the objective, you will find transportation at the red target, and the grid at the blue one, also, be advised, covenant air patrols and ghost teams have the area outside the building locked down." He stopped mid-sentence, then added. "Good luck Spartans, move out!"

Charlie gathered his team; as did the leaders of the other teams, and charged down the hall, head for the nav-point. When he reached the door, it slid open automatically, revealing a glorious sight. Eight warthogs lay in front of him, turrets gleaming in the bright overhead light.

He walked up to one, and hulled himself into the gunner's position, while Tim Dotson climbed into the sideseat, readying his rocket launcher. Sam Kay, Papa Team's leader climbed into the drivers seat, and turned on the engine.

Papa team specialized in vehicles, and Sam Kay was by far the best Warthog driver he had ever seen, pulling off feats that looked impossible.

All around, members of Papa team were in the driver seats of the warthog, with the exception of Adam Heron and Lisa Foggy, Whiskey 3, who were also taking the wheels of vehicles.

Charlie gave a signal to move out, and the Spartans sped past the open garage door, and into hell.

"Ahhh!"

Ash, body parts, and dirt flew from the ground as the covenant mortar tank blew a marine to bits, but Rainbow's shields protected him from much of the blast. Moments later, the air filled with the deafening sound of a pair of M808 Scorpion Main Battle Tanks firing their main cannons, and the Wraith was quickly destroyed.

He lifted up a MA5B assault rifle he had found on the ground, and quickly unleashed a burst of shots, downing a charging squad of grunts.

He raked fire across the advancing enemy soldiers, holding his AR in one hand, the M6D pistol in the other.

But it wasn't enough, they were still being driven back by the

covenant, and the few marines they had were falling left and right.

He quickly shot a jackal that was charging in the head with the pistol, and its head exploded in a flash of dark purple blood.

He fired off a few more shots, and then dropped the now empty pistol to the ground, switching over to the MA5B.

He kept up a suppressive fire, allowing a squad of marine who were pinned down a chance to retreat. Suddenly, the whine of a warthog, filled the air, and sure enough, eight warthogs, all fully loaded, sped out of an open garage, surprising the covenant.

Rainbow smiled under his helmet, _Go get em. _He thought.

As the warthog sped out of the darkness of the garage, and into the sunlight, Charlie was glad for the light, but that feeling quickly evaporated as he got a glance of the scene before him.

There was hundreds of covenant, Jackals, Grunts, Hunters, a tall, four jawed aliens, whom seemed familiar to Charlie, though he didn't know why.

Bodies and wreckage was everywhere, dozens of warthogs and ghosts lay on the ground, blown to pieces. The remains of several Wraiths dotted the landscape, and Charlie spotted a scorpion tank, main gun blown off, and fires burning along its hull.

The warthogs engine roared as they charged through the mess of covenant, running down anyone who got in their path, and Charlie used the surprise caused by their unexpected appearance to his advantage, hosing down grunts and jackals with the Warthog's mounted M41 Light Anti-Aircraft Gun, and Covenant blood pooled as Charlie let lose.

In the sideseat, Tim Dotson unleashed rocket after rocket, killing Covenant by the dozens.

The eight warthogs of the Spartan's team had almost cleared the sea of aliens when the covenant finally woke up, and plasma fire was soon everywhere, and Charlie's shields could barely take the barrage.

The Warthog wasn't faring much better, by the time that they emerged from the storm of covenant, its hub caps were blown off, the glass was cracked, a huge piece of the front body was missing, and a small fire was raging where the piece had been broken off. The engine was coughing badly, but the Hog was still driving, so Charlie decided that it hadn't been a complete and total failure.

However, despite the damage to the Warthogs, and the huge amount of covenant troops, they managed to get past the bulk of their force, and they sped off into the forest, using the trees to guard them from aerial attacks.

They sped on, and as the trees flashed by, Charlie wondered what was going on at the base.

End
file.